THE MARCH TO THE SEA

BY MAJOR S. H. M. BYERS

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THE MARCH TO THE SEA

A Poem

BY
S. H. M. BYERS

"A campaign the like of which has not been read of in past history."—U. S. Grant.

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TO THEM

WHO MARCHED WITH SHERMAN

TO THE SEA.

THE MARCH TO THE SEA.

INTERLUDES.

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THE MARCH TO THE SEA.

PART I.

PRELUDE.

1.

O READER, listen, if it is thy will
To know of things that half forgotten are—
Heroic deeds that may thy bosom thrill,
And hear a tale of heroes in the war.

2.

Think that you hear a bugle sounding yet,
And see a camp within a forest fair,
White rows of tents amidst the green aisles set,
And silent sentries slowly walking there.

3.

See once again the bivouacs in the wood,
And soldiers sleeping where the shadows fall,
The oaks and pines, that centuries have stood,
And glorious moonlight shining over all.

4.

And smouldering fires whose ashes have grown cold,
And stacks of muskets standing there in line,
And banners drooping, with their stars of gold,
Beneath the moonlight and the silent pine.

5.

For things like these a thousand times were seen,
Blue coat, or gray, their camps were still the same,
And oft a river only rolled between,
That saw them foemen when the morning came.

6.

Then gleamed their blades, and shone their fronts of steel,
The fearful sounds the leaders' voices drown;
The guns flash out, the black-mouthed cannons peal,
As if the forests all were crashing down.

7.

And brave they fought, whichever side they stood,
And met death there, not trembling nor with fear,
For blue or gray, now struggling in that wood,
Each struck for something that his heart held dear.

8.

And when again the night around them fell,
And in their camps all peacefully they lay,
The glorious moon, with its enchanting spell,
Still shone alike on blue coat and on gray.

* * * * *

THE SILENT CITY.

ATLANTA.

I.

IT WAS a time not very far away,
For men still live who knew that city well,
And though their beards be turning into gray,
Their eyes rekindle when again they tell
How on a time they saw a city, fair,
Where no one lived, yet armies marshalled there.

II.

Grass grew at will in every empty street,
And roses bloomed on every garden wall,
And sweetbriar climbed with dear and noiseless feet;
One almost thought to hear the blossoms fall,
Or the bright moonlight, as it shone apace,
It was so silent in that wondrous place.

III.

Closed every door and every latticed shade,
Where once fair maids on lovers had looked down,
In the dear days ere hope began to fade,—
In the dear days ere all had silent grown;
Ere cruel war upon the city burst,
To leave its children wanderers and accurst!

IV.

The old town clock there in its steeple high,
Still tolled the hours upon the starlit air,
And faint one heard the hungry watch-dog's cry
Chained to his post,—he was forgotten there;
And days had gone, and nights in silence passed,
Since all the people from the town were cast.*

V.

Calm sat the city in its solitude,
No sound of wheels or footsteps now was heard,

* Note 1.

In the white moonlight tower and steeple stood,
The summer wind the rose-leaves scarcely stirred;
Only the notes of some far bugle's call
Disturbed the silence that was over all.

VI.

Long summer days the hostile armies strove
For mast'ry of this city, now so bare,
And many a field and many a far-off grove
Told of the death that soldiers met with there;
A hundred days of conflict and of blood,
A hundred days, so long the city stood;

VII.

Till, on a time when thousands had been slain,
And graves were thick in every wood and dell,
And death reaped men as harvesters their grain,
The day was lost, and then the city fell:
The city fell—and through its every gate
The people went, and left it desolate.

VIII.

And they who conquered camped about
its walls,
And left it standing empty and alone—
Its silent streets and its deserted halls,
Its roses blooming, but its people gone.
One had not known, it was so still and fair.
That war and death had ever entered there.

IX.

Then came a calm, and while the victors
lay
In their white tents, amidst the forest green,
They told the tales of their long, danger-
ous way,
Of many a march, the battles they had seen,
Before they reached this city of delight,
For so it seemed in the soft summer night.

X.

One told how once on Lookout's height
they fought,
Wrapped in the clouds, and hid from all be-
low;

How every step with danger had been fraught,
Each cliff a fort, and every tree a foe;
How on they climbed, along the mountain dread,
And no soul asked what still might be ahead.

XI.

Till at high noon an awful darkness fell
Of mist, and fog, and smoke—a battle shroud—
And who his nearest comrade none could tell,
Nor see the flames of cannon in the cloud,—
When, suddenly, a rift broke in the west;
They saw, and cheered, and charged the mountain's crest.

XII.

Another told of Missionary Ridge,
And Sherman's army by the Tennessee,
That starless night, and never any bridge,
The army floating there so noiselessly;
The muffled oar, the silence, and the tide,
And death, grim, waiting on the other side.

XIII.

The awful charge, the storming at the Left,
The hundred guns that flamed across their path,
The battle roaring in the mountain's cleft,
The smoking rocks, the red-hot cannon's wrath,
Till down the hill there came the exulting cry,
"The Ridge is ours; they fly, the foemen fly!"

XIV.

And round the camp-fires there was talk of him
Who led our Left to victory on that day,
Who, spite of foes, and wounds, and valor grim,
Still kept his heart like some sweet child's at play;
Not war his choice, nor conflict's dreadful din,—
His love for others took the whole world in.

XV.

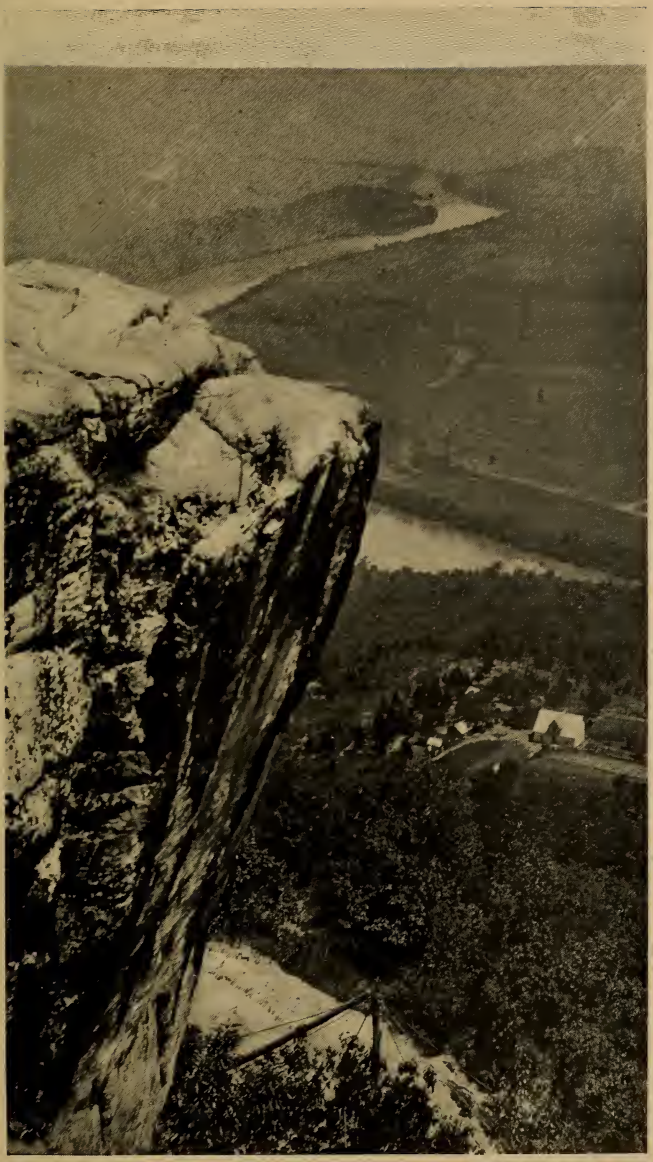
At every camp-fire he was called the Good,
By every soldier he was called the Brave,
The kind, true knight, whom every comrade would
Have followed, faithful even to the grave;
The glorious hero, warrior of the West,—
Mighty his sword, but peace he loved the best.

XVI.

Of him they told how, with prophetic eye,
From Lookout's heights he saw Atlanta rise,
And knew that there his battle-path must lie,
Or else in vain were all his victories.
And farther, deeper still, his vision went,
Of armies marching o'er a continent.

XVII.

The drums now beat; "Lights out!" the sergeants call;
Sounds the tattoo in all the forest round;
And soon 'tis silent in the bivouacs all,
The camp-fires, dying, smoulder to the ground.



"LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN."

Above the camp the stars their silence keep,
And in the moonlight all the soldiers sleep.

XVIII.

The soldiers sleep, and in their visions feel
Once more the thrill of that first battle day,
When down the lines they saw the flashing steel,
And heard the guns, and saw the men in gray;
The smoke, the heat, the furious battle-cry,
The squadrons charging where the wounded lie.

XIX.

Again in sleep Resaca's hills they see,
And Kenesaw, with all its heaps of slain,
The batteries, hid by many a rock and tree,
In their fierce dreams they see them all again;
And Dallas Woods, where quick a thousand fell,
And that dread field men called "The Hole of Hell."

XX.

Still in their dreams Atlanta's cannon roar,
Round that fierce scene where brave McPherson fell,
And Peach-tree creek, and Ezra church; once more
The siege, the charge; they hear the awful yell,
Till, waking, lo! it is the dawn they see—
Their dream of war the morning's reveille.*

XXI.

Then through the camps a rider hurries by,
"Great news—great news!" to all the list'ning host,
Of some great thing they are about to try,
Some wondrous march,—Atlanta to the coast;
And round about the very forest ring,
The bugles echo, and the soldiers sing.

* * * * *

* In the armies, North and South, this word was pronounced as if written rev″-a-lēē′.

SOLDIERS' SONG.

"FALL in, fall in, good news has come,"
The joyous soldiers sing;
And down the lines and up the lines
The glorious tidings ring.
"Sherman, hurrah! we'll go with him
Wherever it may be,
Through Carolina's cotton fields,
Or Georgia to the Sea.

"Let every blue-coat soldier-boy
Put on his knapsack well,
There'll be no knowing where we'll go,
Nor coming back to tell.
Up boys, hurrah! the order reads,
'The troops shall forage free,
And flanking parties will go out
When marching to the Sea.'

"What if some soldier boys should fall?
Well, there's no use to sigh,
The grave at last will cover all,
We have but once to die.

Sherman, hurrah! we'll go with him
Wherever it may be,
Through Carolina's cotton fields,
Or Georgia to the Sea.

"A thousand miles we've marched before,
And battled half the way,
What matters then how many more
Be added on to-day?
Look boys, hurrah! 'tis Sherman comes
Along the lines, and we
Will cheer the General as we go
Through Georgia to the Sea."

* * * * *

XXII.

FINISHED the song, and every heart beats high,
And horse and foot are gath'ring far and near;
Polished each blade, and every gun they try,
The army trains in long white lines appear.
"March in light order," is the one command,
"The soldiers all will forage from the land."

XXIII.

Burned every bridge between them and the North,
Destroyed all roads, and fordless every stream;
Now many a one sends his last greetings forth,
To some far home, now fading like a dream.
Not in their arms alone they trust, but cast
Themselves on God, who leadeth all at last.

XXIV.

Like sailors turning to an unknown sea
Where no ship's keel has ever gone before,
Not knowing where, if any land there be,
Or what may greet them on that distant shore;
So seems it now, and only this they know—
Their hearts are strong, and their great leader true.

XXV.

"Now cut the wires," the leader said, "but note
One message first to him we leave behind."*

* General Thomas.

And kneeling down upon the ground, he wrote,
"We march at dawn,—the Sea we hope to find."
He turned his face, and through war's vistas came
A light of glory shining round his name.

* * * * *

XXVI.

Far, far away, Atlanta's children weep,
Yet see, nor dream, what fearful fate has done;
The weary wanderers of the city sleep,
Nor hear their foes nor any signal gun,
Nor any sound upon the midnight wind
To tell of all that they have left behind.

XXVII.

Little they dream of how war's dreadful needs
Have doomed their city to some sudden fall,
Or how themselves have sown the awful seeds
They soon shall reap in war's red carnival.

They sleep, they dream, they see their
homes so fair,
The quiet moonlight and the roses there.

XXVIII.

They dream of days when all was sweet
and still,
And blessed peace her dear wings cast
around,
When blossoms bloomed by every tarn
and hill,
And violets kissed the sweetly scented ground;
Of their own homes, ere the invader came,
In sleep they smile, and call Atlanta's
name.

XXIX.

But lo! already smoking columns rise
In conflagration o'er that fated town,
Illumed the woods, and reddened half the
skies;
In every street the storm comes sweeping
down,
And bursting bombs hurl their destruction
dire,—
Altanta's doom; *the city is on fire.*

XXX.

Atlanta's doom! A hundred years shall tell
The tale anew of that terrific morn,
How tower and dome and walls together fell,
Or in fierce flames were to destruction borne;
How in one night all that had been so fair
Perished and left but ruins standing there.

XXXI.

And round that place where that fair town had stood,
Ten thousand graves told what the cost had been;
No fallow field, no hill, no pleasant wood,
But there some mangled soldier's grave was seen.
There blue and gray—their fearful conflicts done—
Together slept, nor asked which side had won.

XXXII.

Once more the sun illumes the horizon,
Once more the bugles sound the call, "Fall in."

On yonder heights they hear the signal gun,
The hour has come; the great march will begin.
And from their camps the steady columns wind,
In long blue lines,—Atlanta's left behind.*

XXXIII.

Their faces South along the unknown way,
With measured tread the bronzèd veterans go.
No gorgeous pomp, no glorious array,
But plain, strong men, and feared by every foe.
Sublime they sing, and glorious anon,
Of old John Brown, whose soul was marching on.

XXXIV.

For many miles the serried column spread,
On many roads their daring horsemen flew,
A sight it was, most beautiful, yet dread,
War's wasting besom sweeping Georgia through,

* Note 2.

Destroying all that in its pathway lay,
And threatening towns a hundred miles
away.

XXXV.

A thousand men the railroads overturn,
The red-hot rails round neighboring trees
are bent,
All that a foeman e'er may use they burn;
Flames marked each road where'er the army
went.
Thus through the land the tramping
soldiers wind,
Rich fields in front, a howling waste
behind.

XXXVI.

Thus too each morrow with the risen sun
They march again to bugle note and song,
Or listen, thrilling, to some foeman's gun,
Far forward where the vanguard troopers
throng;
There at some ford hard held by men in
gray,
The daring troopers give their lives away.

* * * * *

DORIS.

'TIS morn and the horsemen ride
Far on at the army's van,
And Doris is at my side,
We are galloping man for man.
"Doris, brother, slow—
Halt," is the cry ahead—
"Look where the colonels go!"
Never a word he said.

My Doris's horse is brown,
And my good steed is gray,
We've ridden them up and down
On many a battle day.
"Look, Doris, see!
Something is wrong, I know."
Smiling he looked at me,
Looked where the colonels go.

The bridge is burned, and the ford
Is filled with the men in gray,
And under the trees a horde
Of rebels that block our way.

"Charge, cavalry, charge!"
See how the sabres gleam,
Slowly out of the wood,
Quickly down to the stream.

And full in our faces flash,
As into the creek we ride,
The glare of the musket's crash,
A gun from the other side.
"Charge, cavalry, there!
Charge on that blazing gun!"
There's a shout on the morning air,
The ford and the creek are won!

A shout on the morning air,
Till the forests resound again;
We have taken the crossing fair,
And lost but a dozen men.
Doris? comrades?—God!—
Doris? It cannot be—
Yonder upon the sod,
And never a word to me!

I buried him in the sand,
And tarried behind a day,

Till the army should come to hand
To the place where my Doris lay.
"Cheer, soldiers, cheer,"
That's what the General said;
How little they seemed to care
That Doris was lying dead!

My Doris's horse is brown,
And my good steed is gray,
But I shall take his instead of my own,
And now I am on my way.
"Charge, cavalry, charge!"
Little it is to me,
Whether I live or whether I die,
Or whether I reach the sea.

* * * * *

XXXVII.

LONG in the North the people sit and wait,
In doubt and fear what yet the end may be,
If time or tide, heroic deeds, or fate,
Shall bring that army safely to the sea.
"They all are lost," so rumor darkly said,
"In the deep forest, and their leaders dead."

XXXVIII.

And here and there some soldiers had gone down,
Captured or killed if straggling from the line,
For fiercer now the hearts of men had grown,
And war had scarcely any pitying sign;
Life is not much, that men to it should cling,
And death to some seemed but a little thing.

* * * * *

XXXIX.

Rich was that land in everything that grew
On tree or vine, or nurtured in the ground;
Its kindly sun, its sky's ethereal blue,
Its softening rains blessed all the fields around.
From field and vine the frightened owners fled,
From groaning barns with golden ears and red.

XL.

But distant far the rich fields often were,
And, that the army might not want for bread,
Each twentieth man was made a forager,
And so it was the marching host were fed.
On left and right, wherever farms might be,
They roved the lands as privateers the sea.

XLI.

Grotesque their garb as ever one could find,
To camp they rode fantastically grand,
In hats and coats the planters left behind,
Mounted on steeds such as might come to hand;
Or else in some rich farmer's new coupé,
Its silken cushions piled with hams and hay.

XLII.

And so they went, these foragers, and far,
And each a law unto himself became,
Audacious men as ever went to war,
Or found in fight an easy road to fame.

And many a time in their own reckless way,
They met with death in some far-off foray.*

* * * * *

* Note 3.

FORAGER'S SONG.

1.

THE bugles I hear and the camp is astir,
The sun rises clear on the pine and the fir;
Away let us ride, past the vanguard and camp,
Ere the farmer shall hide all his corn in the swamp.

2.

Already the hills are in purple and gold,
The dawn, how it thrills all the wood and the wold!
No flag and no drum—ah! little they know
How sudden we come, or the roads that we go.

3.

Let soldiers who will plod along on their way,
But give us the spice of a far-off foray:
A brush in some lane with their five to our one,
And a barn full of grain when the scrimmage is done.

4.

Then forward, hurrah! there'll be fun on the farm,
When the cocks and the dogs shall have raised the alarm;
When the darkies shall cry to each gay cavalier,
"We's glad, Mr. Sherman, to see you is here."

5.

Then here's to the bummer who longest can ride,
A sheep on his shoulder, his gun at his side;
And to every brave fellow who goes on before
To forage good food for the grand army corps.

6.

Then up, while the hills are in purple and gold,
While the dew's on the grass, and the sheep are in fold;
Let others who will watch along on their way,
But give us the morn, and a far-off foray.

* * * * *

XLIII.

SO day by day the army moved along,
Flanked left and right by these bold foragers;
'Tis now a cheer, or now an army song,
Or bugle's note the soldier's bosom stirs,
And catching step to that wild music's strain,
They bend their faces to the distant main.

XLIV.

Through field and wood the blue-coat soldiers stride,
The battery wagons fill the road between,
Far in advance the troopers gaily ride,
The long white trains fill up the varied scene;
Like grown-up boys on some wild pleasure bent,
With swinging step the fearless soldiers went.

XLV.

A sight it was! that sea of army blue,
The sloping guns of the swift tramping host,

Winding its way the fields and forests through,
As winds some river slowly to the coast.
The snow-white trains, the batteries grim, and then,*
The steady tramp of sixty thousand men.

XLVI.

Yet they were far within a stranger's land,
A foeman brave was round them everywhere,
And ambuscades and swamps on every hand,
And bridgeless streams, and foemen waiting there;
Still feared they not the dangers of the way,
But trusted him who led them day by day.

XLVII.

And if, perchance, they saw him down the lines,
To the blue skies there went the wild huzza,—
Amazed the rocks and the tall, silent pines,
That never heard such music till that day;

* Note 4.

And far away still other columns hear,
And wave their flags and join the mighty cheer.

XLVIII.

By many a road the swinging lines went on,
By many a farm, through many a hamlet rude,
Where every soul save some poor slave was gone,
The village green turned to a solitude:
Or if some, fearless, kept the lonesome place,
Scorn marked each brow, contempt looked from each face.

XLIX.

But once unto a city fair they neared,
With shaded streets like to some wooded glen,
And in its midst a great white house appeared,
Within whose walls sat solemn whiskered men,

Who great laws made, and proclamations gave,
And ever cried, "Be brave, be brave, be brave."

L.

Fearless they seemed as solemnly they sate,
Like men who dared at duty's post to die,
But lo! one shot outside the city's gate,
They took their hats and were the first to fly;
On horse, on foot, chief magistrate and all,
Disgraceful fled, and left an empty hall.

LI.

And in their stead some blue-coats sat them down,
And merry made of all things grave or gay,
And laws they passed declaring that that town
Should, *nolens volens*, with the Union stay.
And many days within that town, 'twas said,
Men laughed at how their Legislature fled.

LII.

And round the camp-fires many an evening,
The soldiers too talked of those solemn men,
Or else told tales, or one a song would sing,
When all would join him in the glad refrain.
And so it was that every camp-fire had
Its tale to tell, its song to make them glad.

LIII.

And once, as closer round a fire they drew,
A poet comrade gave his fancy flight;
Stories he told of lovers, false and true,
And tales of war—then would have said
"Good-night."
"Not yet," they cry; "enough of love and sport;
"Still tell of Corse, and how he held the fort."

* * * * *

WITH CORSE AT ALLATOONA.*

IT was less than two thousand we numbered,
In the fort sitting up on the hill;
That night not a soldier that slumbered;
We watched by the starlight until
Daybreak showed us all of their forces;
About us their gray columns ran,
To left and to right they were round us,
Five thousand if there was a man.

"Surrender your fort," bawled the rebel;
"Five minutes I give, or you're dead."
"Not a man," answered Corse, in his treble,
"Perhaps you can *take* us instead!"
Then pealed forth their cannon infernal;
We fought them outside of the pass,
Two hours, the time seemed eternal;
The dead lay in lines on the grass.

* Note 5.

But who cared for dead or for dying?
The fort we were there to defend,
And across from yon far mountain flying,
Came a message, "Hold on to the end;
Hold on to the fort." It was Sherman,
Who signalled from Kenesaw's height,
Far over the heads of our foemen,
"Hold on—I am coming to-night."

Quick fluttered our flag to the signal,
We answered him back with a will,
And fired on the gray-coated rebels
That charged up the slope of the hill.
"Load double," cried Corse, "every cannon;
Who cares for their ten to our one?"
We looked at the swift-coming rebels,
And answered their yell with a gun.

With the grape from our fort in their faces,
They rush to the ramparts, but stop;
Ah! few of the gray-columned army
That day left alive at the top.
On the parapets, too, lie our wounded,
Each porthole a grave for the dead;
No room for our cannon, the corpses
Fill up the embrasures instead.

Again through the cannon's red weather
They charge up the hill and the pass,
Their dead and our dead lie together
Out there on the slope in the grass.
A crash from our rifles—they falter;
A gleam from our steel—it is by.
"Recall, and retreat," sound their bugles;
We cheer from the fort as they fly.

Once more and the signal is flying—
"How many the wounded and dead?"
"Six hundred," says Corse, "with the dying,"
The blood streaming down from his head.
"But what of that? Look! the old banner
Shines out there as peaceful and still
As if there had not been a battle
This morning up here on the hill."

* * * * *

LIV.

"TELL on, tell on," the eager listeners cried,
As each new tale of love or war was done,
And half they cheered at Sheridan's great ride,

And laughed or wept as each new yarn was
spun;
Then all at once they wrangled, near and far,
As to what thing had brought about the
war.

LV.

One said the politicians; others said
'Twas cotton, else the niggers did it all;
Or abolitionists; had they been dead
There never had been any war at all.
Then one spake up, who by the fire had
lain,
"*This is God's war*, to me 'tis very plain.

LVI.

"You all have heard, but listen, hear once
more,
Of that old Shepherd of New England's sod,
Whose hero-blood lies at the Nation's door
Because he feared the everlasting God.
Curst was the land for that black deed,
abhorred,
For they had slain an angel of the Lord."

* * * * *

THE BALLAD OF JOHN BROWN.

BY old North Elba's hill-girt town
A shepherd, dressed in homely brown,
Beside his flocks one morning stood
Amidst the rough field's solitude,
And wanting aught of else to do,
His Bible from his pocket drew,
And read some pages, till he saw
How straight and simple is the law.

"Do unto others as you would
That they should do to you." He stood
A little while when he had read,
Then closed the book, and prayed, and said,
"I have not done this thing at all."
He glanced beyond the pasture wall,
And saw two bondsmen hurrying by,
Who had escaped from slavery.
Far from the South they fled one day,
And good men helped them on their way.
And now the shepherd thought of this,
How far and long he'd been amiss,

How in the land he called his own
A monstrous evil had upgrown
Till millions of his kinsmen stood,
Bound hand and soul in servitude,
And he had lifted heart nor hand
To cleanse the foul blot from the land.

He knelt and made to God a vow,
That if some day, or if somehow,
The shepherd of North Elba could
Become God's instrument for good,
To drive the curse from out the land,
He would give all his years, and stand
First in the ranks of those who make
Their bed with death for Freedom's sake.
That moment round about him shone
A light unearthly and unknown,
But fair, supernal, as some star,
That shines where only angels are.
And then a low voice seemed to say,
"Thou art my servant from this day."

. . . . . .

Years passed, and he who heard the Lord
Became an angel of the sword.

Wherever wrong, oppression, dwelt,
There his right hand was quickly felt.
Stern, as became his pride and name,
That hither with the Mayflower came,
Yet little children loved to stand
Beside his knee or press his hand;
But hated, wronged, despised was he,
As was that One of Galilee,
And no man dared to give him bread,
Lest vengeance fall upon his head.

Only a prophet here and there
With soul to soar, and hand to dare,
Saw in the old man's shining sword,
The secret purpose of the Lord.
Like some strong knight of olden time
Whom bards have sung in many a rhyme,
Alone he fought against the wrong,
Nor asked which side was the more strong,
For well he knew one in the right
Could chase a thousand in the fight.

. . . . . .

Years passed, but never once forgot
The bondsman's tears, the bondsman's lot,
Nor that fair morning in the field

Where his great vow to God was sealed.
And many a sad slave's eyes grew dim,
At thought of freedom and of him.
And many a bondsman's feet were led
To lands where slavery never spread.
Yet, wronged himself, despised and poor,
He trod the wine-press o'er and o'er:
Though full of bitterness the cup,
To the last dregs he drank it up.
Burned were his barns, his corn, his wheat,
His murdered sons lay at his feet;
To misery his life seemed wed,
A price was placed upon his head;
Yet yielded not his heart of steel,
Nor questioned he of woe or weal.
"Who perils naught in God's great strife
He is not worthy of his life.
To live with wrong were mortal crime;
Who fears is born out of his time.
So one more blow the curse I'll give;
What if I die or if I live?
Years are not of our life the sum,
Nor dies one till his time is come.
Nor matters it, so if at last
The curse of bondage shall be passed."

He struck. 'Twas proud Virginia felt
The blow the shepherd's strong arm dealt.
Where the Potomac winds its way
From the blue mountains to the bay,
A little village smiling waits
The stranger at its outer gates;
Immortal grown since that first blow
That laid at last the monster low.
One autumn Sabbath in the night
He set the whole town in a fright;
With but a handful of brave men
He scared the lion to his den;
But ere the noontide of that day,
Dead half his comrades round him lay,
And ere night's shadows had grown dim,
A thousand soldiers marched on him.
But spite of numbers, wounds, and blood,
Like some chased tiger there he stood,
And fired his rifle till, the last
Poor chance of hope or rescue past,
He fell amidst his children dead,
Hurling his curse on slavery's head.
And no fierce foeman where he fought,
And no cold court where he was brought,
No frowning judge, nor lawyer's scorn,

Nor pain of body, bleeding, torn,
Could make him one small moment yield,
Whose life to freedom had been sealed.

Writhing upon his cot of hay,
Unconquered the old hero lay,
Though pitiless around him stood
His captors thirsting for his blood.
Unmoved he heard the judge's cry,
"Away with him, and let him die."
Unmoved and tearless saw them come
To lead him to his fearful doom;
The scaffold saw, but not afraid,
He walked as if an angel stayed
Close by his side and bade him hear,
Above the rabble's shout and jeer,
Beyond the scaffold, dark and grim,
The far-off bells that tolled for him;
Adown the drifting years to look,
And see all chains, all shackles broke;
And farther, through the drifting cloud,
Beyond the coffin and the shroud,
With his glad eyes the gates behold,
The Master's face, the crown of gold,

And in the pearls encircling it
These words, for his own glory writ:
"As unto them ye did, so ye
Have likewise done it unto Me."

* * * * *

LVII.

"THAT is my story," said the soldier,
"and
That's why I think the conflict is of God.
They did not see the everlasting Hand,
They heeded not, so passed beneath the rod.
They mocked His face, nor saw the holy light,
And that is why we all are here to-night."

. . . . . .

LVIII.

A white-haired slave who to the camp had come,
Sat near the fire and heard the story through;
Silent he sat like one who might be dumb,
But while they talked his eyes still larger grew,

For now, confirmed, as if by holy Word,
The things of which he had but dimly heard.

LIX.

And when the moon her glory had put on,
And silvered o'er the bivouac and the pines,
With step as light as some poor frightened fawn
He crept away beyond the Union lines.
From farm to farm his hurrying footsteps flew
To tell the slaves the mighty things he knew.

LX.

How down the roads a glorious army went,
"A million men, each with a shining sword,
Their camp-fires lighting all the firmament
As might have shone the camp-fires of the Lord."
How in the woods he heard their trumpets blow,
"Like to the horns that threw down Jericho."

LXI.

Down sank the moon and still he hurried by,
Forever shouting, "Lo! the Jubilee."
The foeman heard the weird and far-off cry,
And wondered much what this strange voice could be.
The bondsmen too, they hear and understand,
As if it were an angel in the land.

LXII.

No sleep that night for twenty miles around,
From cabin homes to cabin homes they flee,
And far away the glorious tidings sound
As spread the waves of some disturbèd sea,
And chanting songs fill all the midnight air,
And sobs and sighs and thankfulness and prayer.

LXIII.

And old men heard who had not hoped to live
To hail in tears the coming of this day,

Though here and there some flying slave would give
A tale of that great army on its way;
Or tell of him whose death, the bondsmen's loss,
"Had made the scaffold glorious like the cross."

LXIV.

Up to the house, the white house on the lawn,
From their rude cabins all the bondsmen hie;
Gone is the mistress, and the master, gone;
And tasks and whips, and gone is slavery;
And ere the dawn illumines field and dell,
The slaves will sing their long and last farewell.

* * * * *

LAST NIGHT I HEARD THE WHIP-POORWILL.

LAST night I heard the whippoorwill,
Good-bye ;
I think I hear his sweet voice still,
Good-bye, plantation.
An angel brought some good news round,
Good-bye ;
Oh, don't you hear the joyful sound ?
Good-bye, plantation.

Oh ! if you never prayed before,
Good-bye ;
Just now you's bound to pray the more,
Good-bye, plantation.
I think I hear the angels sing,
Good-bye ;
Oh, don't you hear the angel's wing,
Good-bye, plantation.

Oh, make your garments clean and white,
Good-bye ;

Great news has come to you this night,
Good-bye, plantation.
Oh, Massa Linkum, make us free,
Good-bye;
Oh, let us hail the jubilee,
Good-bye, plantation.

* * * * *

LXV.

STILL in that forest round their bivouac fires,
The soldiers gossip far into the night;
Some of adventure; some, their heart's desires;
To far-off homes some send their fancy's flight;
Some, of their leaders talk; but most they bend
Their thoughts on Lincoln—him, the people's friend.

LXVI.

They see him toiling in the wilderness,
In simple garb, with hardened hands, but sure.
Hard school of toil, but blessèd none the less,
Where he may learn the lessons of the poor!

Well Nature knew the soul she had to teach,
And gave it wings immortal heights to reach.

LXVII.

They see him stand in joy or toil the same,
And fearing not life's battles or its scars;
The ladder see by which he climbed to fame,—
To them it seemed to lean against the stars,—
And on its rounds, writ in his deathless hand,
"*There shall no more be bondage in this land.*"

"THE TRUMPETER."

PART II.

1.

'TIS morn; the bugles in the camp
Sound loud the reveille,
And far their notes through wood and swamp
Re-echo merrily.

2.

And from their leafy beds the men
Rise up like wakened deer,
And round the bivouac fires again
Make good their morning cheer.

3.

Once more the clarion note is heard:
"Fall in!" goes down the line,
The camp is left to wind and bird,
And to the murmuring pine.

* * * * *

LXVIII.

AGAIN the fir trees that an hour ago,
Stood like lone ghosts above the bivouac fires,
Illumined now with the sun's rising glow,
Lift up their heads like tall cathedral spires;
And far along, in many a blue-coat line,
The columns tramp, the sloping rifles shine.

LXIX.

At times through some grand forest they would pass,
Whose lofty aisles were marvels to behold,
Whose floors of moss and of bright yellow grass,
Like fairyland, new wonders did unfold;
And there abreast the marching columns come
With flying flags, and bugle-notes, and drum.

LXX.

And then one sings, "My Country, 'tis of thee;"
A thousand voices join the glad refrain;

Fit forest song, fit hymn to liberty!
The woods resound, they are the soldier's fane;
Forgot is war, 'tis Freedom's song they sing;
The bugles sound and all the dim aisles ring.

LXXI.

So marched they on, and here and there there came
Great groups of slaves, of young folks and of old,
Children and wives, the poor, the halt, the lame,
To see the sights of which they had been told.
Still spread the tale with wondering accord
Of old John Brown, "The servant of the Lord."

LXXII.

And dusky bondsmen at the roadside knelt
And gave God thanks that they had seen this day.
No heart not flint but at that scene had felt
Pity and shame for all that sad array:

Pity, that help had come so late to hand,
And shame, that slavery e'er had cursed the land.

LXXIII.

And now again their hallelujahs rise,
Like to that chant of Miriam by the sea;
The Lord has heard the lowly and his cries,
His armies come to set the bondsmen free;
And every soldier in that mighty line
Seems in their eyes a being half divine.

LXXIV.

It was a scene such as the world looks on
But here and there in the dim centuries—
The armed host, that tramped its way at dawn,
The lines of bondsmen weeping on their knees,
And praying but to touch the garment's hem
Of men who brought such glorious news to them.*

LXXV.

Nights passed, and days, and every roadside had

* Note 6.

Its groups of slaves now bound for liberty;
Nor any faces were there wholly sad,
So glad were they at thoughts of being free;
Poor simple souls, their cup with joy was lined
At leaving all they ever knew behind.

LXXVI.

At times the scene was picturesque and fair,
The ebon faces shining in their joy,
The half-clad forms of men and women there,
The half-brown maids, with faces soft and coy,
And wistful children, naked and forlorn,
Too young to know they were in bondage born.

LXXVII.

And old, old men with faces like the night,
And locks like snow, that hemmed their dark eyes in;
With teeth like ivory, so smooth and white,
And beards like flakes fresh from the cotton gin.

None knew their age, nor counted they
their years,
Nor scars, nor blows, their sorrows nor
their tears.

LXXVIII.

Red-turbaned matrons ling'ring round the
scene,
Their gay bandanas over breast and head;
The yellow grass, no longer fresh and
green,
The autumn leaves now turning gold and
red.
December days already were at hand,
The Indian-summer of the Southern land.

LXXIX.

Now many a night, around the soldiers'
fires,
In the dim light was seen the bondsman's
face,
Women and maids, young men and gray-
haired sires,
While tales they told of their down-trodden
race;

And songs they sung, for music still was his;
Wrongs had not robbed the poor slaves' power of this.

LXXX.

In his worst hours, in all his years of wrong,
Rude song had been his only hope and stay;
Nor day so dark but that some simple song
Could make it light, and drive his tears away.
Simple of heart as was his music's strain,
The gentlest race that ever wore a chain.

LXXXI.

And dance he could, in his fantastic way,
And patted Juba round the fires at night—
Hoe-downs, and jigs, and many a capering play;
The soldiers shouted in their wild delight.
The flick'ring flames danced on the bivouacs round
As if they too had pleasure in the sound.

LXXXII.

And cocks crew loud that had some battle won,
For this, too, was a soldiers' camp-fire sport,
And woe that cock, who when his fight was done,
Had no great news of victory to report!
Into the stew-pan straight his body came,
Unknown to glory and unknown to fame.

LXXXIII.

But, lo! for him, though common barn-yard fowl,
Who had wrenched victory from some better blood,
To him the cheers; up rose the mighty howl
As if some Cæsar down the columns rode;
Glorious his fate, he lived, the soldiers' pride,
As on some knapsack he would proudly ride.

LXXXIV.

Still round the camp the slaves like gypsies clung,

And lived on what their busy hands could find
Of plenteous waste, or what the soldiers flung
To them of bread, or food of any kind;
Content if they could only surely be
Flying away from their sad slavery.

LXXXV.

For there was no one in that dusky throng
Who did not see in their escaping thus
A resurrection from the grave of wrong,
And to their people God's new exodus;
So that no hardship seemed too great to stand,
If but at last they reached their promised land.

LXXXVI.

Nor dared they halt, for oft behind them rode
Men fierce of heart, enraged to see them fly
From their hard masters, who in cruel mode
Might capture all or slay them utterly;
And little choice was there for any one,
To die like this or live as they had done.

LXXXVII.

Nor midst the troops was every man their friend ;
At sight of wrong men were not always moved ;
Some had in heart no sympathy to lend,
And some the curse of slavery approved,
And little recked if sorrow might befall,
Or woful chance should put them back in thrall.

LXXXVIII.

Thus on a time, beside a rapid stream,
A column slept—it was the early dawn ;
And at their rear a thousand bondsmen dream
Of sweetest days now swiftly coming on ;
But ere the sun lit full the forest fair
The column marched and left them sleeping there.

LXXXIX.

And then, as if by cruel war's mischance,
The bridge is cut ere they have crossed the stream ;
They see the rapid water's cold expanse,

And far away the blue-coats' rifles' gleam.
"Horror!" they cry, to sudden death consigned,
"The bridge is gone, and we are left behind!"

XC.

Broad was the stream, most pitiful the cry
Of that black throng quick-gathered on the shore;
They see their hopes in one dread instant fly,
Before them toil and slavery once more;
Dreading the foes, that close behind them ride,
Wildly they wail, and plunge into the tide.

XCI.

Old men and young, the weaklings and the strong,
Unthinking rushed into the rolling stream;
Like some wild herd the panic-stricken throng
Went to its fate as in some horrid dream,
Preferring death in the cold river's waves
To going back as bondsmen and as slaves.

XCII.

Still some are saved; the soldiers, kinder than
The cruel fate that willed the fearful thing,
Spring to the stream and do whate'er they can,
And many a poor soul from the river bring.
Yet all that day, adown that stream, 'twas said,
Men saw naught else than bodies of the dead.*

* Note 7.

PART III.

BALLAD.

1.

THE good old times were bravest times,
Alas that they are by!
'Twas then the land's best citizens
Were not afraid to die.

2.

Then Country meant to small or great
A something to defend;
And nothing was too dear to give,
No blood too good to spend.

3.

And no one asked if any time
Or often he must fight,
Or what the cause—'twas one to him,
His country must be right.

4.

Thus was it e'er Atlanta fell,
And foes were put to rout;
When the great land was in despair,
And clouds hung all about.

5.

A message came to Sherman's men—
In cold and rags they stood,
And many names of battle-plains
Were written with their blood.

6.

"Oh! by your hero past," it said,
"And by each honored brow,
Vain is the blood already spilt
If you should leave us now."

7.

Then spake a colonel of the line:
"Now, men, do as you may;
Three bloody years you've battled through,
Your time is up to-day.

8.

"Three bloody years of heat or cold,
Of toil and marching far;
A hundred battles you have fought,
And each man has his scar.

9.

"If 'tis your will, this moment ends
Your dangers in the strife;
Say but the word and you go home
To sweetheart or to wife.

10.

"But if that one or all should still
His land's behest obey,
Let him step forward as the sign
He stands by it to-day."

11.

Calm stood each soldier in the line
And thought the matter o'er;
Thought of his sweetheart, or of wife,
But thought of country more.

12.

Ten paces out the colonel placed
The torn and tattered rag.
"Who wills it, when the drum shall beat,
Steps to the dear old flag."

13.

"Eyes right;" they looked. "Eyes front;"
they turned;
Each other's face they scan:
One tap of drum—with steady step
Came forward *every man.**

* * * * *

* Note 8.

XCIII.

HEAVENS! such it was that made our armies great,
And such it was that made our Country strong—
A love of land, surpassing home; the state
Was men's first sweetheart four years long.
And faithful they, who standing in that line,
Stepped to the flag at the grim drummer's sign.

XCIV.

And these were they now marching to the sea,
With their dead comrades in their graves behind;
Little they recked what at the front might be,
So that their banners floated to the wind;
For well they knew, so long as Sherman led,
All would be well, whatever lay ahead.

. . . . . .

XCV.

One time they camped beside a rolling stream,
Their kinsmen foes upon the other side,
In the green woods they saw their white tents gleam
And heard the war-songs o'er the glistening tide.
And in the night they heard their sentinel
Cry, "Twelve o'clock, midnight, and all is well."

* * * * *

AT THE RIVER.

BESIDE the stream our bivouac lay,
And by the other side
The rebels camped, so close that they
Could see us o'er the tide.
And twice a day across the way
They heard our bands of music play.

Green grew the grass along the shore,
Kissed by the morning dew;
Like a sweet dream the silent stream,
Coursed its deep channel through;
While overhead the pine-trees said
Low words as if they worshippèd.

The soft winds lifted the sweet mist,
In happiness elate,
And knew not if the flags they kissed
Were flags of love or hate.
With sweetest thrall God's dear winds fall
In benediction over all.

And suddenly the band began
Some sweet and loyal strain;
From the green woods the soldiers ran
To hear the glad refrain.
From shore to shore, the waters o'er,
The gladsome winds the music bore.

A truce to war that moment fell
On blue coat and on gray;
Entrancing music's heavenly spell
On the broad river lay.
Nor sabre's gleam, nor bullet's scream,
Disturbed the silent-flowing stream.

Now sweeter still the music plays
"My country, 'tis of thee."
The blue-coat boys their voices raise,
And sing it fervently.
Sad hearts and sore, on yonder shore,
The rebels love that song no more.

Then Yankee Doodle fills the air,
And slogans fierce of war;
And "Old John Brown," the soldiers there
Take up the chorus far;
And far and near the blue-coats cheer
The loyal music that they hear.

A pause—and then the band resumes,
'Tis "Dixie" is the strain;
And, hark! across the stream there comes
The rebels' loud refrain.
Bronze-faced they stand, the gray-coat band,
And cheer and cheer for Dixie Land.

"Then rally round the flag," once more
And loud the blue-coats cry,
And mock them on the other shore
With songs of loyalty.
Till loud and clear, and far and near,
Each side its own war slogans cheer.

Then all at once the sweeter strain
Of "Home, Sweet Home," is heard;
Both camps join in the dear refrain,
And every heart is stirred.
And, blue or gray, each soul that day
Thought on his loved ones far away.

For one sweet moment, and there seemed
No North or South land there,
Across the river's breast there gleamed
The holiness of prayer.
Forgot were hatred, wrong, and strife;
Each thought of sweetheart or of wife.

Oh! had some power that moment come,
To keep that music's strain,
Then war and hate had all been dumb,
There had been no more slain,
But sweet surcease of war, the lease
Of years that bringeth all men peace.

Still, long as kindlier things shall last
War's rude heart to adorn,
No touching scene will have surpassed
The pathos of that morn,
When blue and gray, in one sweet lay,
Together sang war's hates away.

* * * * *

XCVI.

STILL, northward came no news of all that host,
Since that great day that saw Atlanta fall,
Nor any knew if they should reach the coast,
Or if in battle they were captured all.
"Lost is that army," still grim rumor said,
"Its legions captured, and its leader dead."

XCVII.

Yet every day saw its great General ride
Down the blue lines amidst the columns' cheers.
Through forests dark, across savannahs wide,
They tramped, nor thought of all the Nation's fears;
Content, if only their great leader's hand
Should guide them safely through the unknown land.

XCVIII.

Night saw him silent in his camp alone,
Or walking slowly by his bivouac fire,
When all the army to its rest had gone—
Unwearying soul that never seemed to tire;
What thoughts were his beneath that camp-fire's spell,
When lonely midnight round his bivouac fell?

XCIX.

Heard he at times the far-off foeman's horn,
And planned, in thought, some battle's great array?

Saw he the charge, led he the hope forlorn,
Through the red coals that in his camp-fire lay?
Saw he afar the mighty conflict done,
And his own name, of all, the glorious one?

C.

Saw he through years the arch of triumph rise,
The bronzèd steeds, the trumpeters elate,
The marble shafts that pierce the very skies
To him whose name the people have called great?
Hears he afar the grateful bells they ring,
The shouts of joy, the pæans that they sing?

CI.

Night wraps him round in her mysterious gloom,
Above his head the fir trees waiting stand,
Silent and dark, as is some funeral plume;
The glimmering camp-fire waves its magic wand;

Lone shadows creep about the silent place,
And flickering lights fall on the leader's face.

CII.

A form erect as is some sturdy oak,
Alert, and tall, and quick in every move,
A face deep carved, whose very wrinkles spoke,
And lips that told of battle and of love.
Brown, sparkling eyes, that ever seemed to shine,
A lofty brow where genius sat divine.

CIII.

Men said he was like Cæsar ; only this—
The imperial form and face, indeed, he had,
But his ambition never went amiss,
And love of glory ne'er did make him mad.
Great though his deeds, and great though his renown,
No Antony had dared to offer him a crown.

CIV.

At times he heard some music's far-off strain,
Or snatch of song beside some bivouac fire,
And list'ning caught the gladsome notes again,
Soft in the night as some æolian lyre;
And joyed to think his soldiers free from care,
Though he himself had many a load to bear.

* * * *

MIDNIGHT IN CAMP.

'TIS midnight in the camp,
And starlight in the sky;
In a forest cold and damp
Two mighty armies lie.

A river rolled between,
Where the lone pickets stood;
The camp-fire's faintest gleam
Shone on the silent flood.

Out of the darkness rides
A cavalry brass band;
Down to the stream it glides,
Down where the sentries stand.

Their clanging swords we heard,
As past the lines they went;
We questioned them no word,
But wondered what it meant.

Low spake their leader: "Men,
To-morrow is the fight;
The rebels in that glen
Must hear us play to-night.

"Let's play some loyal air
They may not hear again,
They'll know the strain out there—
Some song of Sherman's men."

And through the starlight fell,
And midst the forest dim,
Like some grand organ's swell,
The Nation's battle-hymn.

Strange thoughts were in the breast
Of many a rebel there,
Who, wakened from his rest,
Heard that last loyal air.

Oh! many heard that night
The last song of their life—
There was no time to write
To sweetheart or to wife.

For morning saw them slain,
Whose souls mayhap were stirred
By that one loyal strain—
The last song that they heard.

* * * * *

CV.

ONE night it was the chaplain's turn to tell
Some story of great danger he had seen;
For though he preached, still he could fight as well;
In many a fray and skirmish he had been,
And on his breast, when back his coat was rolled,
They saw a badge of silver and pure gold.

CVI.

And now beside a little picket post,
Far in advance of all the army's camp,
Where but a handful of that mighty host
Sat round a hidden fire within a swamp,
He stirred the embers, slumbering low, and then
Told them the tale of Andrews and his men.

* * * * *

THE RAID OF THE ANDREWS MEN.

'TWAS April eighteen sixty-two,
Great Shiloh's bloody day,
Brave Mitchell, with his men in blue.
By Chattanooga lay.
Far and alone he had come there,
With but a thousand men,
To chase the rebels to their lair,
The lion to his den.

"If I could take the town," he said,
"With its high ridges, then
I would not fear them though they led
A hundred thousand men;
For to the lofty mountain pass
It is the only key;
Who holds its gates, that moment has
The whole of Tennessee.

"There is a railroad leading quite
Into Atlanta town;
It brings the soldiers up who fight,
And takes the wounded down.
Had I some soldier bold enough
To cross yon river's bar
And burn the bridges on that road,
'Twere worth a year of war.

"But who would think to venture there
With life so in his hand?
It were a deed no soul would dare
For all the Southern land."
Low spoke a captain of the guard—
James Andrews was his name:
"Well, General, 'twere not so hard
As many a road to fame.

"Give me a score of trusted men,
Brown coats, instead of blue,
And ere yon sun sinks twice again
The deed is done for you.
This very night in deep disguise
Each on some path his own,
Will wander where the river lies
Behind yon mountain lone.

"To-morrow night the train will go
From Chattanooga town,
And we will ride to Kenesaw
Before the sun is down.
And there we'll hide and wait the train,
That's coming North next day,
And overpower the guards, and gain
The engine on its way.

"Be ready, you, to take the place
By noon if all goes well;
How far we've run the fearful race
Each burning bridge will tell.
But if no flame nor smoke you see,
Beyond yon mountain's head,
Fly quickly out of Tennesee
And know that we are dead."

That night, through storm and forests damp,
By many a darkening stream,
A band of men set out from camp
Under the lightning's gleam.
Before, around, the foemen lay,
The night grew stormier still,
But still they kept their dangerous way
Past Chattanooga's hill.

"Who are the men who ride with us
From Chattanooga town?
They are not foemen, coming thus,
Their garb our homely brown?
Only their faces all are pale;
Why are they all so still?
Some came on board at Ringgold vale,
And some at Tunnel Hill."

So spake the people in the train,
But night came on ere long;
Some talked of harvests, and the rain,
Some passed the hours in song.
But no one guessed that when the light
Should tinge the mountain's crown,
A hundred men would be in fight
With twenty men in brown.

No sleep that night for any one
Of that heroic band,
And all were glad of morning's sun,
To bring the game to hand.
God! 'twas a sight for one who knew
What errand they were on,
To see how firm their faces grew,
Their eyes, how strange they shone.

Low spake the leader: "Men, I know
To count on every one;
We know what thing we've got to do,
'Twere good that it were done.
Five minutes, and the train is here;
Keep cool, as you are now."
Each thought of some one far and dear,
And wiped his moistening brow.

Right by them stood the foemen's camp,
With many a sentinel;
The sun rose like some mighty lamp
And tinged the mountain swell.
No word is said; no soul holds back;
One moment still for prayer,
And roaring down the railroad track
The train is coming there.

"Ten minutes here for breakfast, men,"
They hear the trainmen cry.
"We'll make it more," said Andrews then,
A strange look in his eye.
He watched the passengers get out,
The trainmen hurry through;
Loud rang the gong, the hungry rout
Quick to the table flew.

"Now is our time, if ever, men,"
The leader softly said;
And every eye was turned, and then
He signalled with his head.
One glance along the line he flung,
One glance his comrades gave,
And to the train the twenty sprung,
As if 'twere from the grave.

Three men upon the engine leap,
Upon the tender, ten,
And seven among the baggage keep;
They are strong-hearted men.
A pin is drawn, the train's in two,
One half is left behind,
And quick the engine leaped and flew,
As if 'twere on the wind.

The rebel soldiers fire and shout,
The wheels fly on amain,
Alarmed, the trainmen hurry out,
And curse the stolen train.
"To horse," cry some, and well they need;
And some stand by and swear
That never yet was such a deed
Of daring anywhere.

"'Tis thirty miles to Kingston town,"
Cries Fuller; brave is he.
"We'll catch them there, a train comes down,
The mail from Tennessee.
Steam up yon locomotive, quick,
The 'Yonah,' flying bird;
We'll teach the Yankees such a trick
As they have never heard.

"Their engine is the 'General,'
And she is strong and fleet;
But 'Yonah' is the little girl
That never yet was beat.
Fill her with soldiers, quick, for when
We meet, full sure it is,
There will be fighting fierce with men
Who'd dare a thing like this."

On, on, they fly, the Andrews men,
Quick as the bounding deer,
When through the woods and down the glen
The horn and hounds they hear.
But practiced hands hold at the bar,
The throttles open wide,
The engine bounds and leaps, and far
For life or death they ride.

"THE GENERAL."

They only stop to break the track,
Or cut the wires down,
Or do some thing to make a wrack,
This side of Kingston town.
"What's all of this?" the Kingston folk
Cry, when they see the ten;
"Here's Fuller's engine roaring hot,
But where are Fuller's men?"

And freight and mail trains crowd them thick;
There is no room, alas!
"Move out, you thieves," cried Andrews, quick,
"And let the Special pass.
For I am bound for Beauregard,
With powder and with lead;
Who stops the Special Shiloh-ward
Will pay it with his head."

That moment and there is a wrack
And roaring far behind;
For Fuller's men have cleared the track—
He, too, comes like the wind.
Amazed, the people hear the din,
And wonder what's about,
For just as Fuller's train comes in
The Andrews train goes out.

And on, and on, and on, they fly,
On six wheels or on four;
The smoke pours out, the clouds go by,
The mighty engines roar.
"Stop, quick, and tear the tracks again,"
Cries Andrews, "and load on
A hundred railroad ties, my men;
We'll throw them as we run.

"More steam, more oil, pile in the wood,
Brakes off, and let her go."
Two strong men hold the lever good;
Two strong men fuel throw.
White are the hot flames roaring there,
And white the roaring steam,
And white the faces of the men
That hear the "Yonah" scream.

On, on, and on; the people stare,
As past the towns they fly;
A lightning's flash is on Adair,
A storm is in the sky.
"Now, let her run for all she's worth
Before our fuel's wet;
There is no longer time to halt,
Nor any wood to get."

The engine rocks to left and right,
The tender springs in air;
By heaven! it was a stirring sight,
To see them flying there!
The hundred ties they quickly fling
Along the railroad track;
But ties, nor logs, nor anything
Can keep the "Yonah" back.

She, too, bounds roaring up and down;
At railroad ties they scoff,
And fast as Andrews flings them down,
So fast they fling them off.
Nearer and nearer still they come,
Their musket's crash is red;
"Pour on the oil, and give her room,"
Was all that Andrews said.

"Pour on the oil and burn the car,
Perhaps as we pass through,
Its flames may catch yon bridge's bar
And burn the bridges too."
Lord, Lord! it was a sight to see,
As any sight of war,
The storm, now raging fearfully,
The burning, flying car,

The flaming at the engine's wheels,
The red-hot musket's flash,
The " Yonah " flying on their heels,
The mighty thunder's crash.
Lord, help them ! Look, the wheels stop still
Upon the slippery track ;
Too steep the grade of yonder hill,
The engine will go back !

A scream, a shout, a mighty yell !
The " Yonah's " within hail.
" Too late, ye rebels, with your curse,
Our engine takes the rail."
And faster, louder than before,
Down the steep grade she runs ;
They hear the " Yonah's " angry roar,
The crashing of her guns.

Oh ! for one little hour of time,
Some moments of delay,
So near is glory unto crime,
Failure to victory !
In their brave hands a nation's hope
Hangs trembling in the scale—
Lord ! but five minutes on yon slope
And they were out of hail !

But who can fight with storm and fate?
The engine has stopped still;
The "Yonah," past the Summit gate,
Is roaring down the hill!
"Quick, spring, my men, to yonder wood!"
It is the leader's cry,
And right and left by copse and flood
The twenty soldiers fly.

What steam and storm could never do
Is done with horse and hound,
And here and there by swamp and slough,
The little band is found.
God help them now, an angrier foe
Was never theirs to meet,
The prison gate, the dungeon low,
The scaffold in the street!

By Chattanooga's hill-girt town,
Within a shady glen,
The wild-flowers and the lilacs crown
The graves of Andrews' men.
Earth holds their earth; their honored names
To children shall go down
So long as heroes' names have worth,
Or brave deeds have renown.*

* Note 9.

CVII.

THE story closed, and for a little spell
They who had listened spoke not any word,
Nor thought if any other there might tell
A tale so sad as this one they had heard.
But soon they talked of other things till dawn
Put out the stars, and brought the morning on.

CVIII.

A few recalled the weariness of war,
And longed for homes that they might never see;
Little to them was shoulder-strap or star,
Their trusted guns their only blazonry.
What theirs to hope? A grave in some lone spot,
Their valorous deeds, their very names, forgot.

CIX.

Nor was that march one long great holiday,
With naught to do but tramp along and sing,
New sights to cheer them on their wondrous way,
And blazing camp-fires, endless frolicking;
Full many a night on cold and sodden ground
Their only rest, their only sleep, they found.

CX.

Glad if some tree its kindly branches lent,
Some fallen trunk kept off a little rain,
Till the cold storm, its blast and fury spent,
Died with the night, and morning dawned again.
When round new fires the veterans essayed
Their garb to dry, their cups of coffee made.

CXI.

And some recalled how, when the roads were worst,
And trains mired down, deep in the mud and sand,
When teams gave out, and drivers howled and curst,
The soldiers pulled the wagons out by hand;
How days they tramped through muddy fields to free
The roads for trains and the artillery.

CXII.

How false alarms had led them many a mile;
The *ignis fatuus* that was never found;
The scanty food, the fireless camp the while,
The dang'rous foe that still was lurking round—
Of such their speech; of such it still had been,
Had not one said, "Let us have tales again."

* * * * *

WAR VIOLETS.

TWO days and nights the battle swept
Through all the forest round;
Two days and nights the wounded slept
Upon the sodden ground.

Then came the roll-call; every name
Accounted for but one.
Some dead upon the field of fame;
Some wounded; missing, none.

"Yes, Barton Jones," the sergeant cried.
The youngest lad was he;
He rode close to the Captain's side
In that brave company.

"Has no one seen him? Men, go out
And search among the dead.
Look in yon wild woods all about
Where last the foemen fled."

They found him in the shady glen,
Hemmed in by many a tree,
Among the bodies of dead men
That kept him company.

Wounded, alone, in pain he'd crept
The shady glen around,
To pick the violets that slept
In the sweet-scented ground.

Kindly they bore him to the rear,
The violets on his breast;
And no strong man but shed a tear
When he was put to rest.

* * * * *

CXIII.

TOUCHED by the words, no comrade round that fire
But saw in thought some far-off village green,
A mother weeping, and a gray-haired sire,
A youthful soldier parting from the scene;
A sister, smiling 'twixt the tears that flow;
A sweetheart proud to see her lover go.

CXIV.

And farther still than village green or street,
They see a glen where bluest violets lie,
And that fair youth, like to the flowers so sweet,
Trampled and torn with death's artillery.
Ah! North or South, bitter for you the day
When your dear hearts among the violets lay!

CXV.

Again the soldier told a tale of one,
He, too, a boy, on Chattanooga's field,
Who, when the roar of the great fight was done,
Lay on the grass that his life-blood had sealed;
Dying, he thought of his heart's pain no more,
But that dear flag that he to triumph bore.

* * * * *

ALMOST UP.*

'TWAS Chattanooga's battlefield;
The night was filled with stars;
Two strong men bore a soldier back;
He wore a sergeant's bars.

A color-sergeant of the line,
On the high ridge he fell,
Where the old colonel gave the sign
To charge them with a yell.

None braver climbed the battle hill
Or stormed the dangerous pass,
Than he, now lying pale and still,
Upon the blood-stained grass.

Beneath the torchlight's flick'ring glare,
Under the starlight dim,
The busy surgeons labored there
Until they came to him.

* Note 10.

"Where are you wounded, sergeant?" said
The kind-faced surgeon. "Where?
Right at the top, sir," said the lad;
"The bullet struck me there."

"Ah! boy, I know. But *where?* I mean,"
Again, in kind surprise.
"Just as I said, sir, at the top;"
Steady his deep-blue eyes.

"Yes, yes, I see!" The surgeon tore
The sleeve from off his arm—
A bleeding gash. "Yes, doctor—*there*
Is what did all the harm.

"I was 'most up—right at the top,
When the ball struck me here—
Yes, almost up." Out in the woods
He heard his comrades cheer.

And faint he heard the pearly gates
Swing outward on the air,
And still he whispered, "Almost up—
The flag was almost there."

* * * * *

"PONCE."

PONCE DE LEON.

THROUGH the woods and the smoke intense,
Charged the lines of the regiment,
Over the field and the low stone fence;
And the old dog went where the Captain went.
Once we halted. Lord! how hot!
Grape and canister filled the air;
The Captain fell, and I saw the spot,
And we all went back; but the dog stayed there.

Through the fight of the afternoon,
Kept he watch by his master dead,
Through the fight till the sun went down,
And the new moon rose on the field instead.
"Sound a truce," said the General; then,
"Gather our wounded from off the plain."

With biers and spades went the burying men
Out in the moonlight amongst the slain,

Till they came to one with a Captain's bars.
Far at the front, by the fence, he died;
And they saw by the light of the moon and stars,
The old dog dead by the Captain's side.
In the field, in the starlight there,
Under the flag they had died to save,
Under the moonlight, fresh and fair,
They buried them both in a soldier's grave.

Softly and gently, within the ground;
War's fierce terror has still amends.
Some words they wrote by the little mound:
"Sacred, forever, to two good friends."
Ponce de Leon, the St. Bernard,
True in life, and in death more true,
In the time of the great reward,
He will stand at the right hand, too.

* * * * *

CXVI.

STILL marched the soldiers, journeying on and on ;
A bold, brave foe hung round them left and right;
The little towns, with half their people gone,
Looked in amazement at the wondrous sight;
Some saw with scorn, a few with secret tears,
The stars and stripes they had not seen for years.

CXVII.

For years that flag had been a hidden thing;
Men had not dared unfurl that banner there ;
No little children now were taught to sing
" God bless our land ! " The loyal, in despair,
Whispered their griefs ; no soul aloud dare pray
For his own country in that awful day.

CXVIII.

And now they see this mighty army come,
Like some vast cloud, with vengeance in its train;
With woful faces, trembling lips and dumb,
Once more they hear the loyal bugle's strain;
For one short day, above the village gate,
Waves the old flag they have been taught to hate.

CXIX.

Waves the old flag—and then the bitter end:
The torch, the flame; their homes, before the night,
With the soft winds their ashes quickly blend;
War's whirlwind stoops to tear them in its flight,
And morning comes to see a naked land,
And trampled fields, where smoking ruins stand.*

* Note 11.

CXX.

Maddened to rage the Rebel horsemen fly
And fling themselves upon their foemen there ;
Useless, they only find a place to die ;
Their own brown fields become their sepulchre.
For them no household fires again may burn,
No village bells ring out their glad return.

CXXI.

In some lone swamp, or by some roadside drear,
In years to come some epitaph will tell
How, "In this mound alone is sleeping here
A soldier boy they buried where he fell."
Enough the words, whichever side he stood :
"He thought it right,—lies here, and God is good."

. . . . . .

CXXII.

Oft, too, by night the columns hurried on,
Hearing dull cannon on some far-off flank,

And though their feet had journeyed since the dawn,
And here and there one at the roadside sank,
Still on they marched, till some dark river's breast,
Its bridges burned, gave them a moment's rest.

CXXIII.

Then came a scene, most weird and wondrous grand:
A thousand torches in the forest stood;
A thousand men with axe or saw in hand
Hew down the trees, and bridge the rolling flood;
And planks and ropes from the high banks are strung,
And light pontoons across the water flung.

CXXIV.

Throughout the darkness flares the pine-knot's light,
And shadowy forms are hurrying to and fro,
The dark stream gurgles off into the night,
The bonfires glimmer on the sands below;

Gigantic seem the horsemen as they ride
Out of the woods, down to the river side.

CXXV.

The bridge is finished, forward moves the line,
With steady step to the low-beating drum,
With glare and smoke from out the darkling pine,
'Neath flick'ring lights the silent columns come.
The stream is crossed, the dying torches fall
On the wet sand, and darkness covers all.

CXXVI.

Sometimes again the march was lightly done;
Steady the tramp, commencing with the morn,
E'er yet the light of the fair rising sun
Tinged half in gold the dry leaves of the corn.
Then noontide saw them by some shaded stream,
In bivouac resting, and their fires agleam.

CXXVII.

On grassy knolls some sleep the long hours through ;
With dice and cards some chase the time away,
Or fighting cocks, or football ; not a few
In dance, or tale, or music find their play ;
For long as war is of the world a part,
So long will music move the soldier's heart.

CXXVIII.

Their muskets stacked in long, clear rows of steel,
The sun's slant rays on polished bayonets shine ;
One bugle call or one loud cannon peal,
And every soldier had been up in line.
The drum's long roll, one cry, "Fall in!" and then
That darkling wood had turned to armèd men.

CXXIX.

Quick fly the hours; the sunset crimsons by;
Night comes, the woods with camp-fires are ablaze,
In smoke the glimmering branches sway on high,
Illumed yet ghostly in the bivouac's rays.
The tattoo sounds, the guards their vigils keep;
"Tattoo," "Lights out," and all the soldiers sleep.

CXXX.

The soldiers sleep; and yet, perchance, ere morn,
Some fierce surprise falls on th' unconscious men;
Some cannon's boom on the night air is borne,
Or flashing rifles rattle in the glen;
Then beat the drums, and all the camp's a-din,
The bugles sound, the sergeants cry, "Fall in!"

* * * * *

KILPATRICK'S CAVALRY CHARGE.

QUIET that night in our camp we lay,
The pine trees softly above us stirred;
The brook sang low on its winding way;
Only these were the sounds we heard.

Suddenly, and there came a flash,
Blazing red in the wooded glen;
And that quick moment a cannon's crash,
Into the midnight among our men.

Little we needed the bugle's blare,
Little the noise of the scaring drum,
For quick in line we were standing there,
Waiting the foe if he dare to come.

Long we stood in the forest gloom,
Silence only along the line,
Save when a foeman's gun would boom
And tear the limbs from a trembling pine.

Fair was the dawn when at last it came,
Glowing and red o'er the field it lay;
And beyond the wood, by its tinted flame,
We saw a line of the men in gray.

How they looked when we saw them there,
Loading their guns for our men in blue!
And they burst their shells on the Sabbath air;
Over our heads in the woods they flew.

Over our heads, and we laughed at first,
Till their lines broke out in a spluttering flash,
And a hurry of musketry from them burst,
And we thought no more of the cannon's crash.

"Cavalry, mount," came the clear command,
As down before us Kilpatrick rode;
His saber glistened in his right hand,
Over his shoulders his fair hair flowed.

"We will drive them out of that field and lane.
Steady!" he said, to the waiting line;
And he looked straight into our eyes again,
As we waited only to see his sign.

Oh! the dawn, it was fair to see;
Rosy and fresh on the fields it fell;
And clear, that moment, as clear could be—
Oh! we heard the voice of Kilpatrick well!

"Front rank, sabers, and pistols, rear:
Forward, gallop, and charge!" he cried.
Over the ditch and the fences near,
Straight at the guns of the foes we ride.

Down the hill and across the brook,
Up the slope like a hurricane;
The very ground with our squadrons shook,
And charging troopers fell thick as rain.

Over the fence and the barricades,
Dashing, cheering, we cut our way,
And we hear the thud of our slashing blades,
On the stubborn heads of the men in gray.

Smite and pound on the rebel head,
Strike and thrust at the blue dragoon,
Till the desperate gunners all are dead—
They are lying still as a day in June.

"Now, right about!" for the day is ours;
Back to the woods, for the lane is won;
But oh! the grass and the withered flowers
Are red with blood when the charge is done!

Once again in the line we stand,
And down before us Kilpatrick rides;
His saber glistens in his right hand,
And his face glows fair like a new-made bride's.

Cheer after cheer as he rides along!
But the soldiers lying dead
Will never know of the cheers and song,
Or the words Kilpatrick said.*

* * * * *

* Note 12.

CXXXI.

AND now it seemed as if they could go on
Forever marching in this wondrous way;
The morning's foe at evening would be gone;
Nothing there was that could that army stay.
With lightsome step they marched, and cheered and sang;
The hills re-echoed, and the forests rang.

CXXXII.

And all were happy, for right well they knew,
That march once done,—the South cut clean in twain,—
Sweet peace would come, the war would then be through,
And they would see their far-off homes again.

And so with hopes like happy children they
Marched laughing on, and war was almost play.

CXXXIII.

Till on a day they fell upon a land,
Low, flat, and sterile; void of everything
For man or beast. The cold unpitying sand
To their tired ankles went; nor budding spring
Nor summer made that region wholly fair,
Nor pierced the sun the dull, dark forests there.

CXXXIV.

Now more the foe pressed hard at every stream,
Held every bridge, in every swamp lay hid;
In the swamp's twilight and its murky gleam,
No soul could see of anything they did,
Nor hear alarm, till, suddenly, a flash,
A cry of pain, and a fierce musket's crash.

CXXXV.

Hungry and tired, they who had hoped before,
Now feared a little what might happen yet;
For little now the wagons had in store,
In these last days that seemed so desperate.
And all men knew that hurrying armies could
Still cut them off in some great swamp or wood.

CXXXVI.

But on a day, while tired and sore they went,
Across some hills wherefrom the view was free,
A sudden shouting down the lines was sent;
They looked and cried, "*It is the sea! the sea!*"
And all at once a thousand cheers were heard,
And all the army shout the glorious word.

THEY LOOKED, AND CRIED, "IT IS THE SEA! THE SEA!"

CXXXVII.

Not since that day when the great Genoese
Placed his proud feet upon a new-found world,
Had such glad shouts gone up to heaven as these,
When to the breeze the old flag was unfurled,
And all the army in one mighty song
Passed the glad news, "*It is the sea,*" along.

CXXXVIII.

Bronzed soldiers stood and shook each other's hands;
Some wept for joy, as for a brother found;
And down the slopes, and from the far-off sands,
They thought they heard already the glad sound
Of the old ocean welcoming them on
To that great goal they had so fairly won.

CXXXIX.

High waved the flags, and every bugle played ;
And silver bands whose notes had not been heard
For days, in the dull forests where we'd strayed,
Where joyous songs our hearts had never stirred,
Poured forth their notes ; yet little heeded we,
Our souls too busy with that glistening sea.

CXL.

Now all at once things sad turned into gay,
The very swamps seemed changed to fairy green,
No longer dull the fields about us lay,
Turned to enchantment the inglorious scene ;
Forgot the weariness, the toil, the pain ;
Forgot were e'en our hapless buried slain.

CXLI.

To see this ocean ! that was joy supreme ;
Not in our lives had ever we before
Seen such a sight ; and like some fairest dream
Sped the quick moments, for that shining shore
To our glad hearts, and to our wondering eyes,
Gleamed like the storied gates of Paradise.

CXLII.

Some swore they tasted sea-salt in the air,
Some strained their eyes at little specks far off,
And called them ships, and looked for sailors there ;
And some saw fleets in the deep ocean trough,
Laden with bread and all good cheer that we
Could crave, who brought such glorious victory.

CXLIII.

At times we thought we heard the very waves,
Though distant miles the white sea still from us,
Or the low murmuring by the shore, where laves
The water, restless as mankind; and thus
Our hearts went faster than our feet, and none
But said, "At last the weary war is done!"

CXLIV.

But lo! behold! just as the end was near,
A cannon boomed across the army's way;
And by the sea we plainly saw appear
A frowning fort, strong held by men in gray,
And round about it palisades so high,
Who charged that fort might surely fear to die.

CXLV.

Black, belching guns frowned on its parapet;
And though we wept to see the sweet sea's face,
The longed-for goal was not accomplished yet,
And that fair shore might be our burial place.
Then, suddenly, our leader's form appeared,
The proud flags waved, and all the army cheered.

CXLVI.

Long looked he there out on the whitening sea,
Scanning in vain some little trace to find
Of friendly fleet, if any there might be,
Or signal flag, upon the evening wind.
But fleet, nor flag, nor ship was anywhere,
No sign to tell they knew that we were there.

CXLVII.

That hour held fate, and well our leader knew,
One short delay and all could still be lost—
All that we hoped, and all we had come through,
And his own fame, and all that marching host.
Anxious he gazed into the speechless space;
And, breathless, looked we in our leader's face.

CXLVIII.

"Men," then said he, "yon fort that's in our course,
This very night must come into our hands."
Then cheered we all, and many clamored hoarse,
To have that honor, in the woods and sands
To storm the fort, and ere the sun be set
Wave the old flag above its parapet.

CXLIV.

Then quiet marched five thousand veterans
The dark woods through, by dauntless Hazen led,—
Through half-cleared fields, by swamps and boggy fens,—
While from the fort the shells shrieked overhead;
Till all at once the bugles sounded clear,
"On to the works!" We answered with a cheer.

CL.

The dear flags waved, and all the lines went on,
Toward belching guns, past those high palisades,
In the dark smoke; one moment they were gone,
And then one cry, one mighty charge, they made;
Into the fort a thousand blue-coats sprung;
The stars and stripes above its walls are flung! *

. . . . . .

* Note 13.

CLI.

Bright shone the moon upon the fort that night,
And bright it shone upon the glistening sea;
And far below we saw by its pale light,
Our ships of war that lay there silently;
And on the faces of our dead it shone—
Blue coat or gray, to them it was all one.

CLII.

And all that night beneath the Southern moon,
With dead around us, all so patiently,
We sat and talked of that fierce battle noon,
Until we saw the sun rise from the sea;
And when it rose in all its glory, then
We sang the song of Sherman and his men.

* * * * *

SONG OF SHERMAN'S MARCH TO THE SEA.

OUR camp-fires shone bright on the mountains,
That frowned on the river below,
While we stood by our guns in the morning
And eagerly watched for the foe,
When a rider came out from the darkness
That hung over mountain and tree,
And shouted, "Boys, up and be ready,
For Sherman will march to the sea."

Then cheer upon cheer for bold Sherman,
Went up from each valley and glen,
And the bugles re-echoed the music
That came from the lips of the men.
For we knew that the stars in our banner
More bright in their splendor would be,
And that blessings from Northland would greet us
When Sherman marched down to the sea.

Then forward, boys, forward to battle,
We marched on our wearisome way,
And we stormed the wild hills of Resaca;
God bless those who fell on that day!
Then Kenesaw, dark in its glory,
Frowned down on the flag of the free,
But the East and the West bore our standards,
And Sherman marched on to the sea.

Still onward we pressed, till our banners
Swept out from Atlanta's grim walls,
And the blood of the patriot dampened
The soil where the traitor flag falls;
Yet we paused not to weep for the fallen,
Who slept by each river and tree;
We twined them a wreath of the laurel
As Sherman marched down to the sea.

Oh! proud was our army that morning,
That stood where the pine darkly towers,
When Sherman said, "Boys, you are weary;
This day fair Savannah is ours!"

Then sang we a song for our chieftain,
That echoed o'er river and lea,
And the stars in our banner shone brighter
When Sherman marched down to the sea.*

* * * * *

* Note 14.

CLIII.

IT was the end, and yet one march the more;
The Carolinas heard our columns' tread;
Th' unhappy town that first began the war
In ashes lay, with half its soldiers dead.
On land and sea the glorious tidings swell,
And Sumter rose the day that Charleston fell.

CLIV.

And proud Columbia, too, in ruins lay,
And shrieking shells passed through its halls of state,
Then all bethought them of that other day
When in these halls Secession sat elate.
Now, too, on far-off Appomattox field
Grant hurls the storm, and soon the foemen yield.

CLV.

Then came that deed, ah! wofullest of all,
That dreadful deed, that treason's self o'erleapt;
Black night of nights that saw great Lincoln fall,
The one great soul for whom the whole world wept.
First, peace he saw, then laid his troubles by,
Crowned by mankind with immortality.

CLVI.

It was the end; in yonder Capital
The trumpets sounded for one last parade;
Far in the South the veterans heard the call;
For one last tramp the army is arrayed.
Five hundred miles, the march is quickly o'er,
Their white camps gleam by the Potomac's shore.

CLVII.

And on a morn, a wondrous morn in May
It was proclaimed that through the Avenue
The mighty host should take its glorious way,
And all the land as one be there to view;
Not in all time had such a sight, I ween,
Of Freedom's hosts in the wide world been seen.

CLVIII.

From many a field the veteran armies came,
And East and West went glorious side by side;
Together felt the thrilling joys of fame,
The people's heroes and the nation's pride;
Together now their long blue columns wheel
Up the long street, one sea of sloping steel.

CLIX.

Two days they marched on that great Avenue;
Two days they cheered, that mighty multitude,
And flowers and wreaths upon their heads they threw;
And all men called the land's defenders good;
And all gave thanks, now the great war was done,
To see these men who had such victories won.

CLX.

But most of all that moved beholders then,
Were the freed bondsmen marching two by two,
Not captive wives and chained and scowling men,
Such as of old the Roman triumphs knew,
But men made free, their days of bondage o'er,
And all rejoiced that slavery was no more.

CLXI.

And some shed tears, glad, joyous tears, to know
What things unhoped had come about at last;
He was raised high who yesterday was low;
Round the poor slave the Nation's arm was cast
Long years the land had passed beneath the rod;
Now through it all men saw the hand of God.

CLXII.

And marching thus the glorious armies went,
Never again to muster in review;
Past the great leaders, past the President,
Swayed crests of steel upon great waves of blue.
And *Sherman!* Once his face his soldiers saw,
And lingering looked, and gave one last hurrah!

CLXIII.

One last hurrah! To him that parting cheer
Was more than fame and glory ever were.
What if he wept? It was a soldier's tear;
They were his comrades who were marching there.
Long, long he looked, moved with a mighty spell,
Then, silent, waved a long, a last farewell.

CLXIV.

But in her shrines where glory loves to keep
Record of souls she dedicates to fame,
There in her marble, pure, clean-cut, and deep,
Behold! men see the letters of his name;
And underneath, in characters as free,
"*To them who marched with Sherman to the sea.*"

* * * * *

ADIEU.

1.

'TIS said that once in times of old
A wizard touched a land,
And turned its hillsides into gold,
To silver all its sand.

2.

A kindlier wizard cast a spell
Upon the South, and lo!
Where once war's dreadful harvests fell
Now corn and cotton grow.

3.

Sweet meadows mark the shaded glen
That war with bullets sowed,
And roses line the lanes again
Where Sherman's troopers rode.

4.

In yonder wood, where once was heard
The cannon's deadly hail,
With softer notes the heart is stirred,
By some sweet nightingale.

5.

War's wasted fields have grown to green,
The streams in Sherman's path
Turn busy wheels, no more the scene
Of battle's deadly wrath.

6.

And they whose swords were sharp to slay,
Have felt war's anger cease,
And busy commerce leads the way
In paths of love and peace.

7.

What matters now if they were wrong?
They were our kith and kin,
And they were brave, and tale and song
Shall tell what they have been.

8.

Once more in fair Atlanta town
The moonlight shines, as when
War's bugles sounded up and down ;
The sweet-briar climbs as then.

9.

And North or South, 'tis all the same,
By pine tree or by bay,
One starry banner guards the fame
Of blue coat and of gray.

NOTES.

Note 1, p. 13. After the capture of Atlanta, General Sherman ordered all the people to leave the town, and for weeks the city was absolutely deserted and silent, though the victorious army camped in the woods around it for weeks. The Confederate army, on losing the town, retired farther south. The unarmed people of Atlanta found homes where best they could, in the villages and on plantations. Many of them never saw Atlanta again.

Note 2, p. 27. The March to the Sea commenced at four o'clock in the morning of November 15, 1864. Sherman had sixty-two thousand, two hundred, and four men and sixty-five cannon. It was three hundred miles to Savannah. The army marched in two great wings, Howard leading the right, Slocum the left. The army corps were commanded by Generals Blair, Davis, Williams, and Osterhaus. The twelve divisions were led by Corse, Geary, Force, Ward, Mower, Morgan, Woods, Hazen, Smith, Leggett, Baird, and Carlin. All were veteran generals, and the soldiers were hardened by many battles. There were five thousand cavalry under General Kilpatrick.

The campaign commenced, in fact, not at Atlanta, but away back at Chattanooga, and the hundred days' battles on the way to Atlanta had been the first act of the great drama. It was the romantic campaign of the war. Many in the North supposed Sherman's army to be lost. It had, in fact, wholly disappeared from all knowledge of the government at Washington. It had entered the unknown interior of Georgia, with its woods

and swamps, and all communication with it was cut off. That was the romance of it all. In front of Sherman were the Georgia militia and General Wheeler's cavalry, also a few eastern troops; while the forts of Savannah, which would have to be captured, were held by strong forces of veterans under General Hardee. Lee was also likely at any moment to send some of his army from Richmond to confront Sherman. Jefferson Davis in a public speech proclaimed that Sherman's army was now about to be destroyed. Many believed it, North and South.

Note 3, p. 34. The "Foragers" were a great band of mounted men, one-twentieth of the army, whose duty it was to scour the enemy's country and bring captured corn, meat, cattle, horses, etc., etc., into the camp. They pressed the planters' negroes, carriages, mules, cattle, and wagons into use, loading them all down with supplies. It was no unusual sight to see fine carriages laden with sweet-potatoes, and the forager driver rigged out in the cylinder hat and swallow-tail coat of some fleeing planter.

They were a brave and unique body of soldiers. They often served in the place of cavalry, and guarded the flanks of the army. They were terribly feared by the enemy and were often mistreated when captured. At one point on the march, eighteen of them were shot after surrendering, and their bodies were piled up at the roadside, labelled, "Death to Foragers." General Sherman ordered Kilpatrick to shoot eighteen prisoners in retaliation for this murder.

See Sherman's "Memoir."

Note 4, p. 38. There were twenty-five miles of wagon trains with the army. These, with the artillery, usually occupied the roads; the troops marched at each side, or through the fields.

Note 5, p. 42. When Sherman was about ready to start seawards from Altanta, Hood, commanding the rebel army at his front, passed around his right flank and started on a grand raid to the North. He met his Waterloo at the hands of Thomas in Nashville. His army was destroyed. Sherman had followed him a hundred miles, but suddenly turned about and started for the ocean. It was in this raid of Hood's that several thousand of his army attacked the little post at Allatoona. Sherman sent his famous message to "Hold on" from the heights of the Kenesaw Mountain, over the heads of the rebel army. Corse did hold on till almost all his men had been killed or wounded and the foe was in retreat.

Note 6, p. 62. The most striking feature of the whole march was the tens of thousands of poor slaves deserting the plantations and striking for liberty. Their songs of joy, their pathetic behavior, made a lasting impression on every beholder. Here was a whole race of human beings suddenly let out of bondage. Not since the return of the Children of Israel had the world seen such a sight. It was a milestone in the history of all time.

Note 7, p. 70. For an account of this awful incident see the "History of the March to the Sea," by Major General J. D. Cox, p. 38 (Scribner's Sons). He tells how the bridge was ordered destroyed by a certain corps commander, and how like a stampeded drove of cattle the poor slaves rushed into the river and were drowned.

Note 8, p. 74. Incidents like this occurred near Atlanta, and more than once. In fact, nearly the whole of Sherman's army promptly re-enlisted on the field.

Note 9, p. 99. This scene took place as described. Its heroes suffered horrible fates. Some were stripped and whipped nearly to death. All were chained for months

in filthy dungeons, and numbers were put to death on the scaffold. All, except one, now lie buried together in the National Cemetery at Chattanooga. The Fuller referred to in the poem was the engineer of the stolen engine. One member, at least, of the Andrews party escaped and, later, joined Sherman's army on the march to the sea, and, as related in stanza 106, is supposed to tell the tale of the wonderful raid.

The writer, after his own capture, met one of the Andrews men in a Southern prison, with a cannon-ball chained to his leg.

The Andrews raid was pronounced by Southerners the "most daring deed of any war." "Had it succeeded," said the Southern press, "Beauregard's army would have been lost."

Note 10. p. 107. This incident was witnessed by General Howard. The boy, in his zeal to do his duty and carry his flag to the very top, thought nothing of his wound except as it stopped him short of the mountain crest they were charging. It may be mentioned that *all* incidents narrated in the story are absolute facts gathered from participants in the march.

Note 11, p. 112. The town of Louisville, in the route of the march, was completely burned up while the troops were in it, on November 28, 1864. Its citizens had been burning bridges, and the soldiers retaliated, but not by order.

Note 12, p. 121. There were few real battles on the march, but constant skirmishing and attempts at surprise. The first battle was fought at Duncan's farm, near Macon; the second was Kilpatrick's brave cavalry fight at Briar Creek, by Waynesborough; the third was in the approaches to Savannah, where the road beds had been filled with torpedoes; and the last fight was the storming of Fort McAllister by the sea.

Note 13, p. 131. The fort thus stormed by Hazen's men was McAllister. It was strongly built and had abatis, ditch, and palisades. The storming took just fifteen minutes. It was sad to see one hundred and twenty-four brave men slain who had made the great march, and who, now in sight of the sea, almost heard the plaudits of the North. The dead of both armies lay there in the moonlight till morning. Sherman himself entered the fort late in the evening, and says in his "Memoirs": "Inside the fort lay the dead as they had fallen, and they could hardly be distinguished from their living comrades sleeping soundly side by side in the pale moonlight."

These were the last who died on the March to the Sea.

Note 14, p. 135. This song was sung by thousands of Sherman's soldiers after the completion of the march, and it had the honor of giving its name to the campaign it celebrates. Its author, the present writer, had been one of Sherman's army, and was captured at the battle of Chattanooga. While a prisoner in the South he escaped from the Macon stockade, disguised himself in a Confederate uniform, went to the Southern army, and witnessed some of the fierce fighting about Atlanta, referred to in the poem. He was discovered and sent back to prison at Columbia, S. C., where he wrote the song. He soon escaped again, rejoined Sherman's army, and for a time served on General Sherman's staff. At Cape Fear river he was sent North with dispatches to Grant and President Lincoln, bringing the first news the North had of Sherman's successes in the Carolinas. The author reproduces this song of his here because it has an interest as being one of the songs of Sherman's soldiers, and one familiar to the country in general in the years following the war.

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